

Archbishop Seghers' Pastoral Visitation.

Interesting Sketch of the establishment of Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the Northwest. Catholic Success and Protestant Failure in Civilizing Indians. A valuable Historical Contribution.

Portland, Oregon, July 21, 1879.

Editor Catholic Sentinel,

DEAR SIR:—As the Vicariate of Idaho (which also contains that part of Montana territory lying west of the Rocky Mountains) is under the administration of Archbishop Blanchet, since the resignation of its Vicar Apostolic—July 16, 1876, and as the Coadjutor to Archbishop Blanchet will visit that region first, I send for insertion in the columns of your valuable Catholic weekly the following historical facts concerning the establishment of Catholic Missions in that region.

THE MISSIONS TO BE VISITED

are those of Northern Idaho, Montana, and Southern Idaho, in the order named. The Vicariate contains four Indian Missions which are still under the care of the Jesuit Fathers whose Order first founded them, and seven other Missions for the whites. The Indian Missions still retain the names given to the tribes by the French Canadians employed as voyageurs by the various early expeditions to this coast, and as traders among the Indians by the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Companies.

The Missions of Northern Idaho are known as the *Nez Percés* (Pierced Noses) and the *Cœurs d'Alenes* (Hearts awls or Pointed Hearts.) Those of Montana are the *Pendants d'Oreille* (ear rings) of St. Ignatius. Their cognomen, for abbreviation sake is written not *Pen* but *Pend'* *d'Oreille*, by omitting the last syllable of *Pendant*. The other tribe is the *Tetes Plates* (Flat Heads) of St. Mary's Mission.

IN THE ORDER OF CONVERSION

to the Faith the *Tetes Plates* are the first, and the manner of their becoming Catholics is worthy of being recorded among the archives of history. In the year 1812, twenty-four Catholic Iroquois Indians from Canada deserted from the expedition organized by Captain Hunt, in 1811, and took up their abode among the Flat Head nation where they intermarried and raised numerous families. During their daily intercourse the Iroquois naturally spoke to the *Tetes Plates* of their religion, their priests, ceremonies, churches and festivals. This information made the Flat Heads desire to learn more about the Christian religion; accordingly, in 1830, they sent a deputation to St. Louis, Missouri, in order to secure Missionaries to teach them the truths of Christianity. The delegation arrived safely but shortly afterwards its members fell sick, they called for the priests, were baptized, and expired kissing the crucifix. Two years later the Indians sent an Iroquois to seek for the Blackgowns. He arrived safely at St. Louis, had his children baptized, and was returning with the glad tidings when he was murdered by the Sioux Indians on his route. A third delegation of two Iroquois was sent in 1839 who also reached St. Louis, which they left in the Fall of that year filled with the hope that some Catholic Missionaries would visit them the ensuing year. This hope was fulfilled by the appearance among them in 1840 of Father P. J. DE SMET, S. J., who founded the Flat Head Mission of St. Mary's in 1841. It is re-



lated by Bishop Rosati of St Louis, Missouri, that some Protestant missionaries, who had left the Eastern States with great éclat, were anxious to settle among the *Tetes Plates*, but the Iroquois told their Indian relatives that "these men were not the priests about whom they had spoken to them. They were not the priests with long *black gowns*, who have no wives, who say Mass, and who bear a crucifix upon their hearts."

THE MISSION OF ST. IGNATIUS

among the *Pend' d'Oreille* Indians was established in 1842. It has a boarding and day school for the Indians, established many years ago, attended by 5 Sisters of the House of Providence, Montreal. That of the *Cœur d'Alenes* in 1843. The *œur d'Alene* Mission also has schools for the Indian children, attended to by three Sisters of the House of Providence, Vancouver; that of the *Nez Perces* in 1875. The *Cœur d'Alene* Indians were very wicked; the name *pointed hearts* signifies their true character, but the Catholic Church—the true civilizer of pagan nations—changed, in a short time, these wolves of the forest into lambs of the fold. Far different was the result in the case of the *Nez Perces* Indians of Lapwai, and of the *Cayuse* Indians of Wailatpu, under the rule of Protestant preachers. The Presbyterian minister Spaulding settled among the *Nez Perces* in 1836; Dr. Whitman, also a Presbyterian minister, started—during the same year—an extensive mission among the *Cayuses*, a mile distant from old Fort Walla Walla, Washington territory. But the labors of both these representatives of sectarianism were almost entirely fruitless if we may judge from the fact that after laboring among them assiduously for eleven years—from 1836 to 1847—Dr. Whitman was murdered by his neophytes, and Mr. Spaulding would have shared a similar fate had he not been rescued from their hands by Peter S. Ogden, Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Co., in January 1848. Mr. Spaulding returned to the *Nez Perces* in

1862 and remained until 1877, (fifteen years) with no better success as he had not sufficient influence over them to keep them from joining the forces of Joseph on the war-path against the whites in 1877.

THE MISSION OF THE COEUR D'ALENE

Indians, was about eighty miles north of the *Nez Perces*; the latter Indians had heard much of the manner in which the Catholic Missionaries instructed and assisted the Indians among whom they labored. Many of them, therefore, embraced the Catholic faith, and, their number increasing, they asked that a priest might reside among them so as to be able to give them the consolations of the Sacraments. Accordingly, Father Cataldo, S. J., yielded to their petitions, and took up his residence among them in 1875. Assisted by the generosity of the citizens of Lewiston, Idaho, he was enabled to erect a Church and established a school, the beneficial effects of which were discovered when, in 1877, it was found that

NOT A SINGLE CATHOLIC INDIAN

under his teaching was hostile to the whites, but, on the contrary, both they and the *Cœur d'Alenes* thoroughly proved their fidelity to Catholic teaching by using their influence among other Indian tribes to keep them from joining the ranks of the hostiles and aided the soldiers by acting as scouts and doing all in their power to bring the war to a close.

MISSIONS FOR THE WHITES.

Of the several missions for the whites, two are in Montana and the other five in Southern Idaho, called, by the early Canadian traders, *Boise*, in English "woody" from *Bois*, wood. This name was given to Fort Boise in consequence of the density of wood in its immediate vicinity.

Missoula City, Montana, is in charge of one of the Jesuit Fathers. It has a day and boarding school, also an hospital attended by six Sisters of Providence from Montreal.

Deer Lodge City, Montana, is in charge of a secular priest, Rev. R. De Ryckere,

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who was sent there in 1867 by the Bishop of Nesqually. In 1873 Father De Ryckere erected a hospital which was opened in October following under charge of five Sisters of Charity from the Mother House of Leavenworth, Kansas. A stone Church, 26x60 with a residence in the rear, was completed in 1876, having cost \$4,000. This Mission extends over a circumference of sixty miles.

The discovery of gold in the Boise Basin of Idaho in 1861-2, having induced a large immigration, Archbishop Blanchet appointed the following year Rev. A. Z. Poulin and Rev. T. Mesplie to attend to the spiritual wants of Catholics. Three Churches were built in 1863; the first at Idaho City, was blessed on the 15th of November; the second at Placerville, on Dec. 20th; and the third at Centreville on Christmas Day.

During subsequent years spacious Churches were erected at Granite Creek, Silver City and Boise City. On December 13th., 1867, three Sisters of the Holy Names, from the Mother House in this city, took their departure for Idaho City to open a day and boarding school which they conducted for two years, but the transitory nature of the population forced them to abandon the enterprise.

VICARIATE OF IDAHO.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, in 1866, the eastern portions of the Diocese of Oregon City and Nesqually were erected into the Vicariate Apostolic of Idaho March 3rd, 1868, with Rt. Rev. Louis Lootens of California for its Vicar Apostolic. Having been consecrated by the Most Rev. Archbishop of San Francisco, August 9th., 1868, he took possession of his Vicariate early in 1869. Bishop Lootens obtained his resignation July 16th, 1876.

The Southern Missions of Idaho are now

attended by two secular priests, Rev. A. J. A. Archambault and Rev. Joseph Pickl. Both priests and the faithful in Idaho have long and earnestly desired the Episcopal Visitation of the Coadjutor Archbishop; and, as a matter of interest to Catholics, I desire to append the following

ITINERARY OF ARCHBISHOP SEGHERS VISIT.

I.—From Portland to Lewiston, Idaho, a mile from the Nez Perces Catholic Mission—401 miles by steamboat in three days, two days on the Columbia and one day on the Snake River. II.—From Lewiston North to Pine Creek—the new Mission where the Cœur d'Alene Indians were removed to a few years since—60 miles on horseback in two days. III.—East to St. Ignatius' Mission among the Pend' d'Oreille Indians, 250 miles over mountain roads rendered difficult through fallen timber. Time: six to eight days on horseback. IV.—Thence south to the Mission of St. Mary's among the Flat Head Indians, seventy miles on horseback in two or three days.—(Missoula City is half way between the two) V.—From St. Mary's south-east to Deer Lodge, 120 miles on horseback or by stage from Missoula. VI. Deer Lodge south to Ogden 475 miles by stage. VII.—From Ogden west to Kelton, 70 miles by railroad in three hours. VIII. From Kelton north to Boise City 300 miles by stage. IX.—Thence northwest to Baker City, the farthest eastern Mission of the Archdiocese, (350 miles from Portland) by stage in two days. X.—Thence south-west to Canyon City, 90 miles by stage. XI.—Thence south-west to Jacksonville by stage. XII.—From Jacksonville to Portland, visiting the intermediate missions and stations at Roseburg, the Coast, from Gardiner City to Ellensburg; Corvallis, Salem, Gervais, St. Louis, St. Paul, and Oregon City.

The performance of this Episcopal tour will occupy nearly three months. Let us all pray that Archbishop Seghers may have a safe and prosperous journey. Upon his return he will subsequently visit the Missions at Grand Coulee Agency, McMinville, Cornelius, Astoria, Dalles and Umatilla Agency.

Your humble servant in J. C.,

F. N. S.